

Health tip: Cooking for better health

A simple way to improve your health is by preparing more meals at home. There are many things to consider when cooking for improved health.

Healthier Fats

Fats are an important part of a well-rounded diet. Healthier fats may help lower cholesterol levels, promote regular brain and nervous system function, and decrease inflammation in the body.

- **Unsaturated fats** (e.g., avocado, olive, canola oils) are heart-healthy and may help lower bad cholesterol
- **Saturated fats** (e.g., butter, coconut oil) should be limited due to heart disease risk
- **Trans fats** (e.g., hydrogenated oils) should be avoided entirely^{1,2}

Cooking Oils & Smoke Points

Choose oils based on cooking temperature:

- **High heat:** Avocado, almond, sunflower oils
- **Medium-high:** Canola, grapeseed, peanut, light virgin olive oils
- **Medium:** Corn, sesame, soybean oils
- **No heat:** Flaxseed, walnut oils (for dressings and marinades)³

Herbs & Spices

Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavor while also adding potential therapeutic health benefits.

- Enhance flavor and reduce sodium.
- Some have health benefits:
 - **Cinnamon:** May lower blood sugar
 - **Turmeric:** Anti-inflammatory
 - **Ginger:** Eases nausea
 - **Garlic:** Supports heart health^{4,5,6}



Benefits of cooking at home

In addition to promoting physical health, cooking at home may also provide emotional and social benefits. Some benefits may include:⁷

- Improved immune system
- Increased energy
- More control over ingredients and portion sizes
- Improved mood
- Lower stress

Cookware Types

Different types of cookware may be better suited for certain things.

- **Stainless steel:** Durable, versatile
- **Non-stick:** Less oil needed, but prone to damage
- **Cast iron:** Excellent heat retention, ideal for searing⁸

Food Safety

Cooking food to its proper internal temperature helps to ensure food safety.

It's recommended to use a food thermometer.

Minimum internal temperatures:

- Poultry: 165°F
- Ground meats: 160°F
- Beef, pork, lamb: 145°F
- Leftovers: 165°F⁹



Sources:

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